

Meeting Minutes

Ontario Fire Service Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee)

Thursday, November 30, 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm
Friday, December 1, 8:30 am – 12:00 pm

*Meeting held in-person at Centre for Health & Safety Innovation, 5110 Creekbank Road,
Mississauga*

Attendance:

Rob Grimwood	O AFC – Committee Co-Chair
Dan Worrall	OPFFA – Committee Co-Chair
John Plater	OPFFA
Adam Neal	OPFFA
Harry Baranik	O AFC
Aaron Burr ridge	O AFC
Jeff Kirk	O AFC
Mark Pankhurst	AMO
Doug Kellam	Volunteer Firefighter (Virtual)
Andrew King	Volunteer Firefighter
John Snider	Office of the Fire Marshal (observer)
Juanita Martin	MLITSD
Erica Arsenault	MLITSD
Patricia Clausen	PSHSA (Facilitator)
Breanne Knowles	PSHSA (Minutes) (Virtual)

Regrets:

Tim Sparks	OPFFA
Cathy Hoffman	AMO
Kayla Thomson	PSHSA (Minutes)

Guests:

Rebecca Mukuna	MLITSD Policy Advisor
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Thursday, November 30, 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Greetings – D. Worrall

- D. Worrall greeted the committee.
- The committee participated in a moment of silent individual reflection.
- The committee was introduced to the new MLITSD representative, E. Arsenault.

Review of Minutes from Sept 9, 2023 Meeting – D. Worrall

- No changes.

PSHSA Update – P. Clausen

PTSD Prevention Plans

- During the last meeting, J. Sam from PSHSA joined the committee to talk about the PTSD prevention plan update. PSHSA will continue to bring the committee updates on

future developments. It was also stated that there is an opportunity for J. Sam to come back for further stakeholder collaboration.

- There has been past participation from committee members in PTSD prevention plan training that was previously offered by PSHSA. It was described as informative and helped with creating a framework for plans.
- The committee discussed how a stronger framework is needed with the recommendation of providing templates and standardization of the PTSD prevention plans as, for example, some were created with one page while others have thirty.
- J. Snider is currently working with the Mental Health Secretariat:
 - 2017 checklist could be utilized.
 - During a health and safety seminar in October the cost of mental health was presented – Since 2017, the cost of mental health has reached \$130 million. There is an opportunity for fire services to be engaged in the conversation.

Web Based Psychological Risk Assessment Tool

- PSHSA has received funding with fast tracked development for this new tool.
- Currently, the tool is being created on a web platform with external marketing and training on how to use the tool to take place in the second half of their 2024 fiscal year.

New R2 eLearning – Free for the Public Safety Sector

- A new eLearning has been released: *R2 – The Fundamentals*, and is free for the public safety sector. Emails to stakeholders and other marketing tactics are to come.

ACTION: P. Clausen to share link with the committee for free access. For reference in the minutes, you can find the link here: [Public Services Health and Safety Association | R2 – The Fundamentals \(pshsa.ca\)](https://www.pshsa.ca)

OPFFA Update – D. Worrall

Lobbying Re: Issues Occurring

- OPFFA members have been lobbying in Queen’s Park surrounding current issues like mental health with the Mental Health Secretariat
- OPFFA supports reducing the latency periods for some presumptive cancers, including rectal, skin, kidney and brain.
- Changes need to be made based on current science.
- OPFFA is advocating for simultaneous dispatch communication between EMS and fire.

Medical Surveillance

- The committee is looking to talk to WSIB for education, testing and for the consideration of updating colorectal cancer sunshine dates to 65 vs 61 as there can be long time exposure. Some departments have retirement at 65+. Others they’re trying to update are skin, kidney and brain.
- New in cancer: “Acute catastrophic incident” also known as a concentrated amount of cancer-causing instances (Plastimet fire, Fort Mac, something like 9/11)
 - The question is how do we validate the fact that something is an acute catastrophic incident? The Ministry of Health and its hygienists will decide parameters based on incidents. The individuals who would be exposed to this acute catastrophic incident for a duration of time would basically be surrounded in a whole lifetime's worth of exposure but only during a single incident.

Wildland Firefighter Representation

- There is currently no representation of wildland firefighters on the committee. The committee discussed opportunities:
 - Have a seasonal firefighter on the committee.
 - A representative from MNRF.
 - Having someone as a resource or observer as a non-voting member.
- Wildfire firefighters tend to be seasonal workers mostly but there is an opportunity to invite MNRF or OPSEU union with one worker/one member of management.

ACTION: J. Martin to confirm with Policy management that the committee supports the addition of a new member/observer representing wildland firefighting.

- PSHSA did a health and safety audit of wildland firefighter health and safety programs and opportunities were found.
 - ⊖ PSHSA reviewed S21 guidance notes and many didn't apply.
- PSHSA shared that they are doing some more work next summer on cognitive demands. The committee showed some interest in this and would be interested in learning more.

New Business

Health Canada Cancer Prevention

- R. Grimwood and D. Worrall as part of the committee were invited to attend an International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and Health Canada symposium in Ottawa back in October.
- The symposium discussed:
 - Doctors are in need of education on topics most important to the fire services community like the variance in presumptive cancer legislation in different provinces.
 - The what, when and how's of cleaning and the distinction of laundering vs cleaning.

Guidance Notes

- Several draft guidance notes are out for comment.
- OAFB has sent an eblast with extended comment deadline to the February 2024 meeting.
- Comments will be discussed at the February 2024 meeting.

ACTION: PSHSA to bring summary of comments to next meeting for committee review.

Air Monitoring Guidance Note – J. Kirk and D. Worrall

- J. Kirk and D. Worrall gave an overview for the committee of the contents of the new draft guidance note.
- Overview of content for the minutes:
 - Front line apparatus carry air monitoring instruments for safety. Need to ensure detectors are accurate. Accuracy is paramount in ensuring instrument alarms at specified alarm points.
 - Some of the concerns or hazards would be related to poorly maintained air monitoring devices which will produce inaccurate readings with the possibility of leading to potential exposures to dangerous atmospheres affecting firefighters. This also can affect public safety as well. Gas monitors also do not provide results instantly, there is often a delay in results.
 - Training in proper methods of monitoring gases in the atmosphere.

- Follow the manufacturer's recommendation.
- Committee discussed a few changes:
 - Move manufacturer's recommendations to top
 - Timelines for bump tests per manufacturer and bump test before use.
- Firefighters should also be aware of the limitations of monitoring, gases that cross contaminate, sensors and false readings.
 - FPLA 1584 states air monitoring should be conducted to ensure that the rehab area is free of gas.
 - Include references to guidance notes on rehab, carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, and agricultural silos.
 - . Consider the addition of a confined space reference.
 - Environments that you don't want to monitor. For example, chlorine and ammonia are corrosive environments where the instrument would be impacted.
 - Add definition of what bump test looks like and how to calibrate with reference back to manufacturer recommendations.

ACTION: J. Martin to finalize and input hyperlinks then send to P. Clausen for posting on the OAFCA website for consultation and review during the February 2024 meeting.

Light Rail, Subway and Rail Line – D. Worrall/D. Kellam/A. King

- D. Worrall, D. Kellam and A. King gave an overview of the new guidance note for the committee. This new guidance note focuses on operating around traditional rail lines including stopping distance, hazards with rail cars, bush fires near tracks, etc.
- Overview of content for the minutes:
 - There is a need for workers to be aware of hazards faced when working around rail and for train companies to be aware when firefighters are on site.
 - Instruction and supervision for appropriate PPE, footwear, eyewear, etc.
 - The development of policies for working near rail lines.
 - Assign additional spotter crews to be xx distance away – Effectiveness would be to influence stopping distance of trains.
 - Red flags to warn train conductors of an incident upcoming so they can slow down and prepare to stop while approaching the scene.
 - Maintain communications between police, rail and fire depending on lead agency.
 - Training could be conducted with other agencies to understand how to operate in the environment.
 - OSHA and NFPA have no specific standards.
 - Transport Canada standards could be relevant but more for train companies and equipment maintenance than emergency services.
- Committee discussed specific areas where this would be useful such as Toronto and Ottawa. Committee also discussed adding electrical hazards to this as well, especially for emergency services working directly on electrified tracks.

ACTION: J. Martin to finalize and input hyperlinks then send to P. Clausen for posting on the OAFCA website for consultation and review during the February 2024 meeting.

OAFCA Update – R. Grimwood

- OAFCA staffing updates were provided.
- New bill being introduced to allow AMPs (administrative monetary penalties) – it is an effective enforcement tool for many departments.

PFAS discussion – All

- NFPA 1970 – consolidated standard
 - Bunker gear shell light test has been removed.
 - Good news – Manufacturers can produce PFAS free gear.
 - Consideration – Without PFAS, gear may not be as protective. It may provide less thermal protection if removed.
- Committee discussed station wear and how there may be no PFAS, but aluminum, dyes, etc. are often found and how research shows that gear has transfer of PFAS so theoretically, the station wear could have PFAS carried over on it.
- Bunker gear is for thermal use and should only be used when risk of thermal insult.
 - Committee discussed alternative materials aside from PFAS and how other fire-resistant products could be chemically risky.
- The committee will continue to monitor any emerging research about how PFAS goes through the system.

Coroner Line of Duty Death Process Update – D. Worrall and R. Grimwood

- D. Worrall and R. Grimwood presented in the previous meeting to the members.
- The policy is complete, but framework is outstanding.
 - Per the policy, the Coroner’s Office will engage the fire service to analyze from an operational tactics’ perspective.
 - Framework for how the engagement will take place is under development - D. Worrall, R. Grimwood, J. Snider and J. Martin to meet on December 1 to discuss.
 - They are looking to roll out on a national level.
- This could be utilized for other emergency service deaths.

Friday, December 1, 8:30 am – 12:00 pm

Guidance Notes:

3-3 Update Station Wear/Thermal Load/Breathability – T. Sparks/A. BurrIDGE
Draft guidance note in development. No update this meeting.

Lithium-Ion Batteries – D. Worrall

- Draft guidance note is quite long and will need to be reduced for publication.
- This guidance note is needed by members, especially now with more electric vehicles on the roads. Lithium-Ion storage devices are also a concern.
- Overview of content for the minutes:
 - Fire crews should be made aware of lithium-ion battery hazards.
 - Gases released can cause strong irritation and are potentially fatal.
 - Consider response environment – Is it on a highway and what is the duration? Dispatchers could help determine on call if the vehicle involved is electric, this could impact response time.
 - Safety considerations – Ensure to mitigate hazards.
- Committee discussed clarification of classifications and the need to simplify the note, as it is not intended to be a training document. Committee suggested that the new guidance note be simplified to:
 - What is the hazard?
 - How do we identify and control?

ACTION: J. Martin to review and revise then send back to R. Grimwood, D. Worrall and A. BurrIDGE.

- Committee discussed the focus of guidance notes on this topic narrowed it to three: Mobile, vehicles and fixed site storage.
 - Same source (battery) but all different.
 - Consider older tech (NIOSH reports) vs new technology (change to venting and deflagration).
 - Due to technology always changing, it would probably be best to go high level.

ACTION: R. Grimwood to connect with J. Martin to adjust to three guidance notes - Batteries, vehicles and fixed site storage. It will come back for review during the February 2024 meeting.

Cancer Communications Working Group – P. Clausen, K. Thomson, R. Grimwood, C. Hoffman and M. Pankhurst

- Working group took forward information on cost of firefighter cancer, proposed some initiatives to provincial budget for prevention instead of payout to those who have cancer.
- \$440 million + utilized, not for prevention but to pay for cancer claims through WSIB. The hope is for future discussions with WSIB to direct money at preventative plans.
- This group was created to look at data for cancer claims and to create a case for cancer prevention that can be provided to municipalities. While the mission is not complete, the work is there. Municipalities may not have the ability to take on additional costs for cancer prevention.
- Committee discussed what work can be done to create data and messaging using communication with provincial government as an audience as municipalities maybe aren't able to invest.
- There are costs associated with adopting the recommendations set out in the cancer prevention checklist.
- We need to clarify the issue. Knowing what needs to be done, there needs to be money put into fire departments to prevent cancer.
 - Who is paying to put in diesel exhaust capture systems and for fire services to renovate old stations and have modern shower facilities?
 - We need to separate bunker gear from apparatus space, provide field decontamination kits, fund ultrasounds and blood testing.
 - Decision makers know what they have to do to prevent it. However, it's incredibly expensive and the money just isn't there.
- The cancer prevention checklist is helping. Approvals for renovations are being granted in reference to it.

Cancer Prevention Document

- The committee discussed putting all resources into one document. A toolkit with data, background, checklist, council reports and other information used as leverage.
 - Research.
 - Checklist (needs revision at some point).
 - Abstract/executive summary about what we know.

ACTION: Working group to revise the checklist, stay on top of data and keep getting costs.

- Committee discussed where the MLITSD falls in this discussion.
 - They do site visits to see what services are doing in prevention.
 - Use of the checklist.
 - Orders for things required like respiratory protection programs.
 - Suggestions for reasonable precautions.

- They can't require specific actions outside of legislation, rather point to best practice to mitigate.
 - Limit exposure through some simple measures and opportunities to get people to change some easy less expensive practices.

Regulation Working Group – R. Grimwood

- Working group submitted proposed changes to O. Reg. 714/94 to MLITSD
 - MLITSD Policy advisor is currently reviewing proposal. E. Arsenault will continue to work and update on this. The estimated time is years due to the process: legislative council, agenda, politicians, etc.

Policy Update – R. Mukuna

Occupational Health and Safety Act Amendments

- On March 20, Bill 79 (*Working for Workers Act, 2023*) was introduced in the legislature.
- As with the previous two Working for Workers Acts (in 2021 and 2022), this omnibus legislation would amend a number of different employment, training and labour statutes.
- Schedule 5 of Bill 79 included an amendment to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to increase the maximum fine for a corporation for a conviction under the Act from \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000.
- The bill passed Third Reading on September 26, 2023, and received Royal Assent on October 26, 2023. The amendment to subsection 66(2) of the OHSA is now in effect.

Discussion

- Courts decide what fine amount will be, compare what other fine amounts have been posted recently and depending on size of company, severity, repeat offender, etc. fines go up.

Government relations update – Dan/Rob

- Line of duty death process – Effectively there.
- Cancer prevention – Moving along.
- MTO – Improved public information and education of slow down move over law.
 - Meeting with ministry of transportation soon.
 - Cabinet shuffle – New minister and chief of staff.

New Business

Third Party Training.

- Training was held outside of Sault Ste. Marie where a third-party trainer came in for water rescue training. Unfortunately, four firefighters were sent to hospital with hypothermia. OFM and MLITSD are doing an ongoing investigation into what happened.
- This is a concern for this committee as we have seen several incidents and fatalities relating to water training practices.
- Unfortunately, there are no regulatory requirements around who can provide this kind of training.
- This type of training is high risk.
- Committee discussed how it is the responsibility of departments to ensure competence of trainers and they must understand who is accountable when bringing in a company when conditions are not met. There needs to be a competent person on site to stop unsafe training.

February Meeting

- There is a location change to FESTI GTAA (Fire Emergency Services Training Institute).
- This meeting will also include a tour of the Toronto Pearson Airport station.
 - The agenda will need to be updated for timing and may create a longer meeting.
 More information to come via email including how to access the site and parking.

Thank you and goodbye to J. Martin!

6+ years, 26+ meetings and a huge part in guidance notes and keeping us on track.

Thank you, J. Martin, for your time, patience, strong work ethic and dedication to the sector we represent! The cancer prevention checklist you worked on with us will save lives for decades to come. Your reach is nothing short of incredible. We weren't feeling in a good place as a committee when you first joined – **you saved us**, you will be missed!

Thank you from J. Martin to this committee for honest and authentic discussions and points of view and at the end of the day, we get things done! Keep in touch!



Committee co-chairs Dan Worrall and Rob Grimwood presenting Juanita Martin with a plaque in honour of her service on the Fire Services Section 21 Committee. From left to right: Juanita Martin, Dan Worrall and Rob Grimwood.

2024 Meeting Dates

February 29 and March 1, 2024 – FESTI (tour is being arranged)

June 13 and 14, 2024 – CHSI

September 16 and 17, 2024 – CHSI

November 28 and 29, 2024 – CHSI